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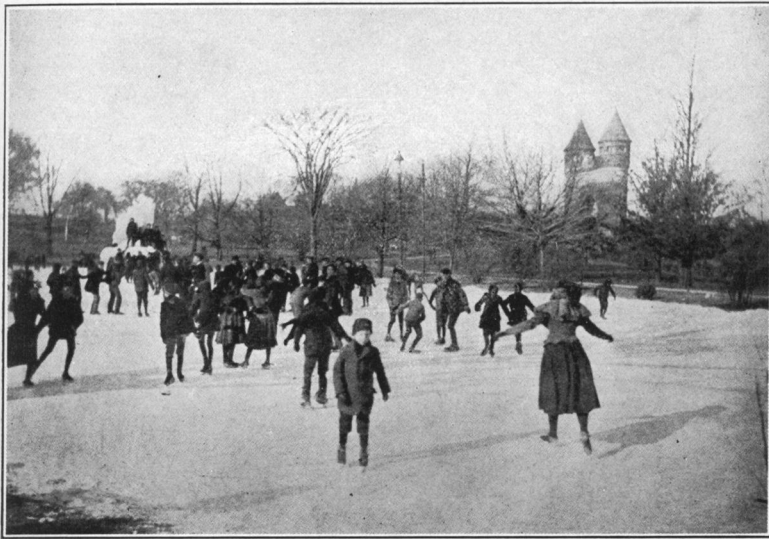
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ginnings of our second period. How high its flight who can foretell? Certain it is, however, that in marking the steps, by which, in America, we have toiled upward toward the heights illumined by the

pure flame of Phidias twenty-four centuries ago, the faithful historian of tomorrow will give high placing to Charles Grafly, teacher and leader, an artist, and master of his craft.



WINTER PLAYGROUNDS

BY CHARLES MULFORD ROBINSON

AUTHOR OF "MODERN CIVIC ART," "THE CALL OF THE CITY," ETC.

WHEN school begins, it is quite a common thing to see in the newspapers the statement that the playgrounds have closed for the season, though there are yet in prospect the bracing autumn days and the long winter season when outdoor exercise is essential and outdoor sports most alluring. Children are not hibernating animals, little legs grow stiff with inaction, eyes dull and sleepy over lessons in school rooms that are of necessity artificially heated, while out doors there is coasting, skating, and snow in

abundance. This is the excuse for winter playgrounds, and the reason some persons have made bold to transform wading pools and even tennis courts into skating ponds, have built safe toboggan slides and put up shelters where warmth is obtainable "on demand."

It has been noted by observing persons that a city playground really carries into the tenement sections the similitude of nature and country much more successfully in winter than it does in summer. With snow covering the baseball dia-

monds and cinder beds, with the apparatus of iron and rope stored out of sight, with the children sliding and skating on what, as far as appearances go, are natural ponds and hills, or building snow houses out of wide-scattered, God-given snow, instead of making pies out of imported sand kept in a box, the mother in the tenement may see from her window a picture very like that which her sister sees from the farmhouse window. And there is the advantage, as a rule, that if the ice on the playground skating pond gives way the child cannot possibly drown.

But of all artificial playgrounds, none is ever as satisfactory as the big parks, and that is as true in winter as it is in summer. In the winter landscape of the park, one does indeed have the country in semblance, for snow is no respecter of pavement or walk or road, and Boreas never in his life handled the engineer's chain. Indeed, winter is the most skilled of all landscape architects of the natural school. He concedes nothing to formalism. Disliking roads and walks, he begins by obliterating them all, and when some means of passage must be provided he has the courage to require that it shall not exceed the traffic's need by even a hair's breadth; his distance effects are superb; his screens most charmingly deceptive; every line of his design is gracefully curving.

There is a tendency nowadays among park commissioners to emphasize more and more the play service of the parks, and that being so, it is good to find a growing recognition in this respect of park values in winter. Of course the parks are beautiful then, but as yet comparatively few persons have developed such appreciation of natural beauty that they are ready to go into the parks when the weather is cold simply to feast their eyes on long gray stretches, blue shadows, and a silver filigree of twigs. It certainly would pay them to do so, but most of them have yet to learn that. Winter sports, however, do bring them into the parks—more than a quarter of a million persons skated in the Boston parks last winter, while many other thousands to-

bogganed and skeed—and in seeking play in the park the discovery is incidentally made that the park playground even in winter is a beautiful landscape picture. After a winter afternoon or evening in the park, thousands go home the better because of something else than exercise.

But we must go back to the children on the small city playground. It surely is no fantastic and sentimental idea that the winter playground is needed to supplement the physical good which is done by the summer playground. If ventilation in little homes is poor in summer, when all the windows are open wide, what must it be in winter when every crack is closed, that there may be the least possible amount of cold to be overcome with costly fire; if gymnastic training is worth while for boys in summer, it is worth while to continue it in the enclosed gymnasium in winter; and if out-of-door play and exercise are desirable for children in hot weather, when they have nothing to do all day but play, it is not less desirable when they have to sit still for many hours, and when the days are too cold for loafing in the open air—when one has no furs.

The winter playground is just beginning to be appreciated; but it ought to get hold of our affections and enthusiasms very quickly. Any one who believes in playgrounds in summer, should be ready to die for his faith in them in winter. We sometimes hear of "summer men" and "summer girls," but we never hear of only summer children. And until we do, let us rub our hands and stamp our feet for warmth, like veritable old St. Nicks, with cheeks like roses and nose like a cherry, championing the children's cause. Our eyes will twinkle as do his, our dimples, too, will be merry, and in our hearts will be that consciousness for which Dr. Rauschenbusch petitions in his recent Christmas Prayer for Children: "O, Thou great Father of the weak * * * help us to realize that every child in our nation is in very truth our child, a member of our great family." Were that felt widely and in sincerity, surely no playgrounds would be closed in winter after school.